

**South Dakota National Guard
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

National Guard maintenance shops start new safety program

RAPID CITY, S.D. – South Dakota's National Guard officially "kicked off" a new program designed to improve safety in its maintenance shops during an informal ceremony held Wednesday at the Combined Maintenance Shop #2 in Rapid City.

It's called the Voluntary Protection Program and it is designed to reduce accidents and injuries in the workplace. The DOD-based program combines OSHA safety standards with the improved standards developed by the workers.

Noting that preventable mishaps drain resources and negatively affect readiness, Guard officials will implement this program throughout all of its 10 maintenance shops across the state. South Dakota is the fourth state to adopt this program that has reported a 24 percent decrease in mishaps.

It is a comprehensive safety program that focuses on four areas; management leadership and employee involvement; work site analysis; hazard prevention and control; and safety and health training.

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Occupational health nurse 2nd Lt. Kathy Hill and Pfc. Mark McMillan, a mechanic, sign the Voluntary Protection Program banner on Wednesday at a ceremony to kick off the new safety policy implemented in the South Dakota National Guard at the CSMS #2 building in Rapid City, S.D.

Link to Photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/20080417-A-0711L-002.jpg>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact Maj. Orson Ward at (605) 737-6721, cell (605) 431-8753 or Warrant Officer B.J. McGuire at (605) 737-6703.

NOTE: Since the terrorist attacks on America, the South Dakota National Guard has mobilized more than 3,100 Soldiers and 730 Airmen in support of the Global War on Terror.

Currently, more than 230 Soldiers and Airmen from the South Dakota National Guard remain on duty in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locations throughout Southwest Asia. More than 4,000 National Guardsmen are available in South Dakota to provide support for state and national emergencies and homeland defense.